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Incl. 3

23 March 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Proposed External Research Project on "The Agriculture of Communist China"

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25X1A5a1 1. On 10 December 1958, GG/F received a copy of [redacted] memorandum of 9 December proposing that a contract be negotiated with [redacted] for "the production of an economic and statistical research report which will develop a land utilization pattern for the major crops of Communist China." After discussions in GG/F, it was decided that the proposed project was of sufficient geographic intelligence interest that it should be discussed with senior officials of the Geographic Research Area in order to determine the proper GRA policy position with respect to the proposed project.

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2. On 12 December 1958, [redacted] met with Acting Ch/G, SA/Ch/G, and Chief, D/GG. The GG/F representatives pointed out their misgivings concerning the possible advantages to the government of undertaking the proposed project on an external research basis under the terms outlined in the D/M memorandum. These misgivings especially concerned: 1) the questionable availability of source materials to the external research contractor, 2) the indefinite professional qualifications of the "consultants" proposed to work on the project -- with only an Associate Professor of Business Administration and an Assistant Research Economist being identified, and 3) the major problem of the difficulty of correlating the results of the proposed project (crop acreage tables by provinces) with other critical factors (e.g., climatic) in testing official Communist Chinese production claims and planned increases. After some discussion and although GG/F misgivings were still present, it was decided that GRA should not actively oppose the project, but should adopt a position of sympathetic interest and willingness to help in any appropriate way. It was understood that the project likely had little possibility of being approved, anyway, due to shortage of external research funds. For this reason, GG/F did not see fit to press their objections more vigorously.

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3. On 18 December 1958, [redacted] visited M/Ag to discuss the project with [redacted] the proposed project monitor, and other members of M/Ag. The GG/F representatives explained GRA's natural interest in the proposed project, since it is so closely related to land-use aspects of geography. They suggested that, in further negotiations on the contract, consideration should be given to requiring that a geographer, preferably one with competence in Far Eastern agriculture, be a member of the research team.

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[REDACTED] emphasized the preliminary, tentative nature of the terms of the project as proposed and said that he would insist, in any final negotiations, on inclusion of provision for flexibility, to permit changes in outline and approach if such appeared advisable on the basis of results of early investigations. He welcomed GG/F's interest and stated that he would coordinate fully with us as the negotiations proceed and, eventually, as the project proceeds. In discussing availability of source materials, it was agreed that much of the necessary source material was available in Washington at the Foreign Branch of the CIA Library and/or FDD. This raised the question of coordinating the use of FDD source materials, since CIA has a continuing need for the material and the contractor might have a simultaneous need. 25X1A1a

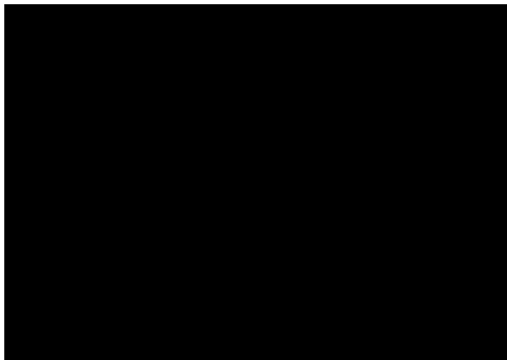
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It was noted that the proposed budget for the project provided for [REDACTED] for Travel and Transportation and [REDACTED] for microfilming of Research Materials, presumably to provide copies of source materials for use in California. There was a brief discussion of the anticipated problem of relating the results of the contractor's research (to be based on provincial organization) to the results of GG/F's agroclimatic research (to be based on climatic regions), but no definitive solution to this problem was forthcoming.

4. Although GG/F still has reservations concerning the advantages to the government of undertaking the proposed project under a California-based external research contract, no active opposition has been officially raised by GG/F to date, in accordance with GRA policy.

5. For the record, we feel that greater net intelligence value to the government would accrue from devoting an equivalent amount of money to bolster the JPRS program of translating the numerous Chinese Communist monographs now becoming available. Selected monographs translated to date, including many issued by such competent research organizations as the Academia Sinica, have yielded significant information on recent crop acreage patterns (as well as other topics of economic geographic intelligence interest) in Communist China, and it is our belief that this program offers the most promising single opportunity for enhancing our fund of recent basic information concerning the economic geography of Mainland China. This should not be interpreted to mean that we are opposed to any and all external research on Chinese agriculture. As a matter of fact, we feel that M/Ag's other recent proposed external research project, on the feasibility of expanding irrigation in China, had real merit and would have represented a worthwhile expenditure of external research funds.

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